

Philosophy 4, Summer B, 2005.
Take-Home Final Exam.

Imagine yourself a physician. You live in Camus, a somewhat remotely placed small city where you tend to the health needs of its rather average population. It comes to pass that this city suffers from an outbreak of a particularly virulent strain of Ebola Zaire. Ebola Zaire is a particularly vicious retrovirus with the unfortunate effect of essentially liquefying from the inside out any poor soul who is infected. Once infected, a person will appear normal for several days until a fever sets in. The fever quickly gives way to vomiting, diarrhea, generalized pain, malaise, and internal and external bleeding. The death rate among those infected is 50-85%.

Due to its infectiousness the disease quickly grows to epidemic proportions within the city itself. As a physician with contacts among public health officials you come to realize that the authorities are about to impose a mandatory quarantine on the entire city. Everyone who is within the city walls at the time of the quarantine will have to remain there until the disease has run its course and the quarantine is lifted.

Now you face a quandary: Should you choose option (A) and, taking advantage of your knowledge, leave the city with your seemingly healthy family while you still can, or should you choose option (B) and remain in the city to aid the relief effort with your valuable skills.

Assume that it is no longer feasible to send your family out while you remain behind. They will need your authority to pass the guards at the gate who have already been alerted to the impending quarantine.

Your assignment for this take-home exam is to argue for one of the following possible moral positions regarding this situation:

- 1.** Because the moral considerations balance each other out, both (A) and (B) are permissible. The doctor must choose between them based on his own preferences.
- 2.** The moral considerations in this situation render (A) morally impermissible, and (B) morally obligatory.
- 3.** The moral considerations in this situation render (B) morally impermissible, and (A) morally obligatory.

This portion of the exam should be 3 pages long, double-spaced with 12 point font as usual.

Before you begin, however, you must decide whether the doctor is a Utilitarian or a Kantian Deontologist. Once you have decided, your essay should begin with an approximately one page concise summary of the central theoretical commitments of the particular moral theory you have decided to work with, leaving the city of Camus out of it for now.

The remaining two pages of the essay should apply the theory, as you have described it, to the situation of the physician in Camus, and support as clearly as possible one of the three conclusions above.

Finally, spend another 1 page answering the following question:

Had you been required to make your argument within the framework of the other moral theory (Utilitarianism if you chose Deontology, and the reverse) do you think you would have come to a different conclusion? Why or Why not?